



To: Members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee

From: Joelle Hall, President of the Alaska AFL-CIO

Date: April 27, 2021

Subject: House Bill 146 - DISCLOSURE OF WAGE INFORMATION

The Alaska AFL-CIO supports HB 146 on the following grounds:

Protecting Alaska's workers: The Alaska AFL-CIO supports measures that protect Alaska's workers, including protecting them from practices that discriminate against them in the workplace. Wage transparency is one important and simple tool that mitigates the gender pay gap.

When individuals are required to provide their last salary but are not provided the salary range for their new job, it hurts their wages, particularly for women. Prohibiting employers from asking about salary history has resulted in higher pay for women and Black job candidates who were hired—8% and 13%, respectively, according to a study authored by economists at Boston University School of Law and published in June 2020. Additionally, when employers use past wages as a bargaining tool instead of paying what the job is worth, workers suffer.

Strengthens existing federal law on non-retaliation: Though the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 (NLRA) made talking about pay legal in the American workplace, many employers retaliate against those who openly and freely discuss wages. As it stands, there is little recourse for workers who are subject to retaliation for discussing wages in the workplace. This bill would raise the baseline of NLRA anti-retaliation protections to resemble modern anti-retaliation laws, providing more of a deterrent against lawbreaking by employers and making a real difference for working families.

Saves employers and job seekers time and effort: The Alaska AFL-CIO would like to see as many Alaskans as possible working in good jobs with fair wages that move our state forward. As it currently stands, employers can post a job listing without a salary range. Those looking to enter the workforce for the first time, re-enter, or transition, should know before applying whether the compensation is suitable to support them and their family. Job searching can be cumbersome for working families, and job seekers should avoid time wasted applying for a job that does not meet their compensation needs and wants. Likewise, it saves employers time, money, and effort. Take a likely scenario in which an employer schedules an interview with a qualified candidate, only to find out after an hour-long meeting that the salary for the posting does not fit the candidate's criteria.